

(TIF application Butte) Multi-story parking garage plan moving forward (MT Standard)

The plan for a new and expanded urban renewal district for Uptown Butte calls for a multi-story parking garage, more landscaping, improved lighting and anchor projects that could include a convention center.

The Butte-Silver Bow Planning Board decided Thursday night that the plan, which includes a new and expanded tax-increment financing district (TIF) to help fund renewal efforts, conforms with an existing growth policy for the area.

The plan now goes to the Council of Commissioners, which must give its blessing before a proposal goes to Montana Department of Revenue for review and possible approval.

Local officials hope the agency approves it early next year because the current TIF — which plays a key role in financing renewal and revitalization projects and initiatives — expires in June. The only specific capital project the plan calls for is a multi-story parking garage that would serve both commercial and residential uses.

County officials have been considering three proposals for a garage, all costing at least \$5 million, that could serve employees of NorthWestern Energy and the general public in Uptown. NorthWestern Energy plans a \$23 million expansion and headquarters in Uptown, which is considered a key development in a new TIF.

The urban renewal plan also encourages promotion of urban living in Uptown, bike lanes and walk ways, and steps to “quiet down” streets through more parking, bump-outs and street and safety signs.

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